DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 397 958 PS 024 328

AUTHOR	Goetz, Kathy, Ed.
TITLE	Fatherhood and Family Support.
INSTITUTION	Family Resource Coalition, Chicago, IL.
REPORT NO	ISSN-1041-8660
PUB DATE	96
NOTE	29p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Family Resource Coalition, 200 South Michigan Avenue, 16th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604 (Item No. RPT 151; members, $4; non-members, $5).
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
JOURNAL CIT	Family Resource Coalition Report; v15 n1 Spr 1996
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Child Development; *Children; Community Programs; Family (Sociological Unit); Family Life; Family Needs; *Family Programs; *Fathers; Parent Participation; Parents
IDENTIFIERS	Family Advocacy; *Family Resource and Support Programs; Family Resource Coalition IL

ABSTRACT

On the assumption that fathers have been relatively absent from family support programs, this publication of the Family Resource Coalition addresses the role of fathers in family support programs, examines the impact of fathers on their children, and describes programs involving fathers successfully. Articles include: (1) "What's Behind the Fatherhood Debate? A Guide for Family Support Practitioners," (James A. Levine, Edward W. Pitt); (2) "Collaborating for Fathers: A County-Wide Coalition Addresses Fatherhood"; (3) "How Programs are Advocating for Father-Friendly Systems," (Dwaine Simms, Elizabeth Sandell); (4) "Child Development: The Difference a Dad Makes," (Kyle D. Pruett); (5) "Parents' Group is a Resource for Fathers, and Mothers): Mar Vista Family Center"; (6) "Father to Father," (Al Gore); (7) "Public Policy and Poor, Unwed Fathers: Case Studies Show Dads Aren't 'Deadbeats'" (Daniel Ash); (8) "Bringing Home Better Communication: Fathers' and Mothers' Groups Work Together in Baltimore"; (9) "Fathers and Families: Building a Framework for Research, Practice, and Policy," (Vivian Gadsden); and (10) "Con Los Padres: How One Program Encourages Father Involvement." A list of resources concludes the publication. (KDFB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 397 958

Family Resource Coalition report

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

INSIDE: Special Message from Vice President Al Gore

Fatherhood and Family Support

Volume 15, Number 1
Spring 1996

3 About This Issue
Judy Langford Carter

4 What's Behind the Fatherhood Debate: A Guide for Family Support Practitioners
James A. Levine and Edward W. Pitt

6 Collaborating for Fathers: Profile of a County-Wide Coalition

7 How Family Support Programs are Advocating for Father-Friendly Systems
Dwaine Simms and Elizabeth Sundell

8 Child Development: The Facts on How Fathers Make a Difference
Kyle D. Pruett

11 Parents' Group is a Resource for Fathers and Mothers

13 Father to Father
A Special Message from Vice President Al Gore

14 Public Policy: Case Studies Show Dads Aren't "Deadbeats"
Daniel Ash

17 Fathers and Mothers Join Forces in One Community-Based Program

18 The Research on Fathers and Families: Building a Family-Supportive Framework
Vivian Gadsden

21 Con Los Padres: How One Program Encourages Father Involvement

22 Your File of Resources on Fathers and Families: Organizations and Publications

ISSN 1041-8660

PS 024328

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
P. Deane
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Acknowledgments

The Report wishes to thank Jim Levine and Ed Pitt, Directors of the Fatherhood Project at the Families and Work Institute, for guest-editing this special-focus issue of the FRC Report and Daniel Ash, Kirk Harris, and David Pate of the Center on Fathers, Families, and Public Policy for their help in determining content, reviewing drafts of articles, and writing large portions of this issue. Thanks to the guidance of this group, this Report has the potential to be a watershed event in the family support movement. It, along with the many father-related events at the 1996 FRC national conference, help to call attention to the role and importance of fathers in families and the lives of children and therefore in attaining the goals of family support.

Thanks also to the staff of father- and family-serving programs who agreed to be interviewed for this Report. It is these people and others like them, who are working to strengthen families and to change the way America works for families, that make this publication possible and the family support movement effective.

REPORT

Editor, KATHY GOETZ

Assistant Editor, JACQUELINE LALLEY

Reporter, DANIEL ASH

Cover Photographs, MARILYN NOLT, KEITH STRICKLAND

Art Director, LYNN PEARSON

Editorial Assistant, SHAMARA RILEY

Printer, BOOKLET PUBLISHING

The FRC Report is published quarterly in the public interest by the Family Resource Coalition, a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization. Membership in the Coalition includes a subscription to the *FRC Report*. Readers are encouraged to copy and share its content; we ask you to credit the Family Resource Coalition as the original source of information.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

About Fathers and Family Support

Fathers are parents, too. This is not news to family support practitioners. Family support programs have always welcomed all family members. Many programs have found it challenging, however, to gain the participation of fathers and to validate fathers' roles in their families' lives. The unfortunate truth is that although fathers have never been excluded from participating in family support programs, they have in practice been relatively absent. And so, in family support programs, the word "parent" has too often really meant "mother."

One reason for this is that family support programs have reflected the assumptions and attitudes of the larger society. Our society traditionally has viewed the nurturing of children as women's domain and has seen fathers' role as that of economic provider. Public programs and policies, such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children and divorce laws, have favored the mothers' parenting role and often in effect discouraged the involvement of fathers in their children's lives. Another factor in the lack of involvement of fathers is that mothers and children are the usual participants in programs so the activities, hours of operation, and staff of many family support programs have better suited mothers' schedules and needs.

In the context of this nation's history, it is only recently that attitudes, practices, and policies regarding the responsibilities of women and men in their parenting roles have begun to change and the separation of women's and men's domains to erode. Women who would have been expected to be full-time caregivers of children are full-time participants in the paid work force. When both parents work, the expectation is that family responsibilities are also shared. There are more stay-at-home dads and fathers taking paternity leave than ever before. Custody arrangements no longer assume that the mother will be the sole—or even the primary—caregiver. The federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1992 guarantees three months of unpaid leave for individuals—regardless of gender—to care for a family member.

Due in part to Vice President Al Gore and his Father to Father initiative, national attention has turned to fatherhood issues. Family support programs around the country are recognizing the importance of fathers to children's development and are making a concerted effort to reach out to support men in their parenting roles. Programs strive not only to include fathers in their activities but to fully understand and affirm the contributions men make to their families, to their children, and to their neighborhoods.

The best way to help families achieve positive outcomes for their children is to ensure the active involvement of both parents in those children's lives. Research repeatedly has demonstrated that children raised in single mother–headed households are more vulnerable socially and economically than other children. We know that many of these children do well, and that having a father at home does not guarantee positive outcomes. However, we also know that having a father who is both physically available and emotionally connected increases the likelihood of a child's healthy development.

There are barriers and challenges to getting fathers to actively participate in family support programs. Many fathers feel under attack; too much of the current spoken and written dialogue blames them for avoiding household responsibilities, for not paying child support, for not being involved in their children's lives. Many men are uncomfortable seeking support from family support programs. In some communities, mothers have grown attached to having the family support program as "their place" and are resistant to increasing the number of men participants. The challenge for the family support field is to build upon the strengths of fathers, of families, and of parent–child relationships and to create environments that include, affirm, and support fathers as well as mothers. And family support programs, as this issue of the FRC Report demonstrates, are rising to that challenge.

Vice President Al Gore is perhaps America's most visible Dad, and is committed to drawing national attention to and reinvigorating the role of fathers. There are many others working on the national and community levels joining this effort. This issue of the FRC Report introduces you to some of their work: the latest theory, practice, policy, and research related to the issue of fathers and family support. It describes the hard work that's taking place to support fathers in communities from California to Maryland and places in–between. It presents the findings of research on how public policy affects fathers' involvement in their children's lives, and it describes the benefits for their children when fathers are involved. We've included a list of resources that we hope will be useful to you as you work toward assuring fathers a vital place in program development.

We welcome your comments.

Judy Langford Carter

Judy Langford Carter
Executive Director, Family Resource Coalition

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

What's Behind the Fatherhood Debate? A Guide for Family Support Practitioners

by James A. Levine
and Edward W. Pitt

In 1992, political strategist James Carville focused Bill Clinton's Presidential campaign with the unforgettable phrase: "It's the economy, stupid!" For 1996, Carville has allegedly updated the message. This year, "It's dad, stupid!"[1]

Professionals in the family support field can expect to hear more debate about fatherhood and fatherlessness this election year and in the years ahead. This article cuts through the rhetoric surrounding some of the most important, controversial, and emotion-laden questions on fathers' involvement in their children's lives. Knowing where the land mines in the fatherhood debate are makes those in the family support field better prepared to sidestep them and get on with the work of helping to strengthen fathers and families.

Both Democrats and Republicans have made responsible fatherhood key elements of their agendas over the last few years. While accepting his party's 1992 nomination for President, Clinton sent a clear warning to fathers who renege on child support: "We will find you." While campaigning for re-election in 1991, Vice President Quayle castigated a culture that believes that fatherhood is "irrelevant" in his controversial "Murphy Brown" speech. Now governors and legislators from both parties are setting up task forces or commissions on responsible fatherhood in California, Colorado, Florida, Wisconsin, Vermont, and other states.

Why Fatherhood? Why Now?

Fatherhood is emerging as a major political and social issue for four major reasons. The first and most important is an unprecedented demographic trend: a large, increasing number of children are growing up in families without the continued presence of a father. Between 1950 and 1994, the percentage of American children living in mother-only families quadrupled, leaping from six to 24 percent. In 1994, 19 million children were growing up in homes from which fathers were absent.[2]

For children, the absence of fathers is an issue not just of quantity of parents, but of quality of life. Children in father-absent homes are five times more likely to be poor and about 10 times more likely to be extremely poor than those whose fathers are present; they are more likely to be on welfare, become pregnant as teenagers, fail school, commit crimes, and experience a host of other problems that result in both emotional and economic costs.[3]

There is a second reason that fatherhood is a high-profile issue, which is often overlooked because it is more complex. Among some populations, men have traditionally occupied a provider role that is now being challenged by economic forces, such as global competition, corporate downsizing, and women's increasing competitiveness in the job market. Now, as in past times of rapid economic and social transition—such as the late 19th-century industrialization, the Great Depression, and World War Two—many Americans are proposing to buoy up the (traditional) male role to restore a sense of order and control.

The third explanation for the current widespread interest in fatherhood is a number of growing spiritual movements that call for men to change their ways of relating to their families. The Christian fundamentalist Promise Keepers are rallying men around the country to take their "God-given place" as leaders of their families. The Nation of Islam, which last year called for the Million Man March on Washington, D.C., is urging men to renew their commitment to their families. And a broad array of non-fundamentalist religious and spiritual groups—as well as civic and social organizations—are operating programs at the community level that promote responsible fatherhood.

Fourth is a set of demographic trends that is increasing the presence of fathers in the lives of some children. As more and more mothers become breadwinners outside of the home, many fathers are—both willingly and, in some cases, unwillingly—taking a more active role in caring for children within the home.

Single Mothers: A Scapegoat?

Many family support practitioners and others worry that the widespread concern over father absence is not so much an outcry over the problems that single-parent families face as it is a way of blaming single mothers for society's problems. The most careful and comprehensive response to this understandable concern is a recent review of existing research by Sarah McLanahan and Gary Sandefur, *Growing Up With a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps*. The authors conclude that "children who grow up in a household with only one biological parent are worse off, on average, than children who grow up in a household with both biological parents, regardless of the parents' race or educational background, regardless of whether the parents are married when the child is born, and regardless of whether the resident parent remarries."[4]

The research does not say, however, that absence of fathers from the home guarantees negative outcomes or that it is the single cause of negative outcomes when they do occur. "Growing up with a single parent is just one among many factors that put children at risk of failure, just as lack of exercise is one among many factors that put people at risk of heart disease," say McLanahan and Sandefur.[5] Low income, including the sudden drop in income that often accompanies divorce, is the most important factor in children's lower achievement in single-parent homes, they say. Low income accounts for about half of the disadvantage experienced by children raised in single-parent homes; the rest is caused by inadequate parental guidance and attention and the lack of ties to community resources.

The bottom line: While growing up without a father does not necessarily cause children to have social and emotional problems, it does increase their risk for experiencing these problems. Conversely, while growing up with a father—particularly a highly involved father—does not guarantee positive outcomes, it does increase the likelihood of these outcomes.

Research should lead us not to blame single mothers, but to strengthen the connection of men to their children and the availability of community resources to all family members. If we are concerned about optimizing children's health and development, we should be promoting the

involvement of both parents in their children's lives, and the involvement of families and family members in their communities.

What's the Answer?

Those in the field of family support know that fathers are important in children's lives, and are grappling with how best to help men establish and maintain an ongoing connection to their children. And while the two typically offered "solutions" to the problem of father absence, marriage and employment, are important, they are incomplete.

Proponents of the marriage solution—most notably sociologist William Julius Wilson and The Annie E. Casey Foundation—say that unwed parenthood and divorce, and thus father absence, have increased because cultural and moral norms about matrimony have been eroded.[6] This idea has been most recently put forth by David Blankenhorn, who argues that "married fatherhood is the single most reliable, and relied upon, prescription for socializing males,"[7] and by David Popenoe who says that "the main reason for contemporary father absence is the decline of marriage."[8]

Proponents of the employment solution say that the number of two-married-parent households has decreased because employment opportunities have decreased and parents' income has dropped, particularly in the African American community. Low male earnings not only reduce the likelihood of marriage, but dramatically increase the likelihood of divorce. Census data show clearly that as men's income rises, so does the likelihood that they will marry. Given these facts, the pool of men who are likely to marry has shrunk, especially among minority populations. Since the 1960s, the percentage of young men ages 25 to 34 who earned enough to lift a four-person family out of poverty has dropped from about 83 percent to 67 percent. In 1993 nearly half of all African American and Latino males ages 25 to 34 earned less than $14,763, the income needed to lift a family of four out of poverty that year.[9]

Both marriage and increased employment opportunities are desirable as ways of connecting men to their children. Many fathers are successfully establishing relationships with their children not through one approach or the other, but through a combination of the two. But where do these solutions leave those who work with fathers and families? Both approaches locate the problem outside the sphere of responsibility of those who work with children and families; after all, what can we do to influence the moral climate or the economic structure of our society and its limited opportunities for minority men?

To fully address the issue of responsible fatherhood—of what will connect men to their children—we must add a third dimension: the community. The community consists of the institutions in which family support professionals work everyday, which include, among others, health and social service agencies, courts, religious and spiritual centers, childcare centers, and schools. In ways that we are now discovering, those who work with families can have a powerful influence on how men fulfill their responsibilities as fathers.

What Can I Do?

In promoting the involvement of fathers with their children, family support practitioners' most powerful tools are their relationships with and expectations of fathers. Low expectations are self-fulfilling; they tend to preclude change. If practitioners assume that men in their communities are not available, interested, or responsible, they are likely to have those expectations fulfilled. High expectations are not a guarantee of change, but at least they set the stage for change to take place. Here are just a few examples of change that has resulted when family support professionals expected fathers to act responsibly:

- In West Virginia, the rate of paternity establishment for unwed fathers has increased from 15 percent to more than 60 percent in just three years. A key factor has been training nurses in birthing hospitals—most of whom are women—to both expect and encourage men to establish paternity.

- Preschools from inner-city Baltimore to suburban Marin County have involved many fathers in their children's lives who had previously been totally absent. The preschools have trained staff to assume that fathers—regardless of marital status—are interested in and responsible for their children. Now, many fathers are as involved as the mothers are.

- In Minneapolis, a partnership between the Episcopal church and the family court of Hennepin County has helped non-custodial, unemployed fathers stay connected to their kids—instead of becoming "deadbeat dads." The partnership is proving that men act responsibly if they are helped to find jobs and are treated as more than walking wallets.

As political debate and rhetoric about fatherhood increase in this pre-election time, it is important to remember the lessons provided by these examples. Family support professionals play a key role in creating and implementing the small changes that, bit-by-bit, will have a major impact on the ways in which fathers are connected to their children in the years ahead.

James A. Levine, Ed. D., and Eward W. Pitt, M.S.W., direct the Fatherhood Project at the Families and Work Institute, 330 Seventh Ave., New York, NY, 212/465-2044 (phone), 212/465-8367 (fax). See the Resource File at the end of this Report *for information on their book,* New Expectations: Community Strategies for Responsible Fatherhood.

Notes

[1]CARVILLE, J. (1996) *We're right, they're wrong* (New York: Random House) 91–96.

[2]THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION (1995) *Kids count data book* (Baltimore, Md.) 5.

[3]THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION (1995) *Kids count data book* (Baltimore, Md.) 7.

[4]MCLANAHAN, S., and G. SANDEFUR (1994) Growing up with a single parent: What hurts, what helps. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press) 1–3.

[5]Ibid.

[6]WILSON, J. W. (1987) *The truly disadvantaged* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

[7]BLANKENHORN, D. (1995) Fatherless America (New York: Basic Books) 38.

[8]POPENOE, D. (1996) Life without father (New York: The Free Press) 14.

[9]THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION (1995) *Kids count data book* (Baltimore, Md.) 6–7.

Resource on Fathers

New Expectations: Community Strategies for Responsible Fatherhood

by James A. Levine and Edward W. Pitt

1995 (New York: Families and Work Institute)

Available from FRC: 312/341-0900

Offers a new way of thinking and acting to promote responsible fatherhood, including a jargon-free review of research, state-of- the-art review of community-based strategies, tips from leading practitioners, and a guide to more than 300 programs nationwide and to the 100 most useful publications.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Collaborating for Fathers:
A County-wide Coalition Addresses Fatherhood

Photo: Marlen Nutt

The five fathers who are gathered around the table of the Fatherhood Coalition in Santa Barbara County, California, make a diverse group. Some are Chicano, some are white; some are middle-aged, others are adolescents; their income levels vary.

These fathers participate in programs or receive services from members of the Fatherhood Coalition, a group of more than 70 service providers, researchers, and advocates for father and families whose outlooks on fathers' issues represent tremendous diversity. The Coalition's members work in health care; adolescents' issues, including teenage pregnancy; gender relations; domestic violence; and substance abuse prevention and treatment. Together they are developing effective ways to serve and support the diverse population of fathers and families in Santa Barbara County.

The five fathers represent this diversity well. All have been or are non-custodial fathers, and none are married, but the similarities end there. Their experiences with child support, for example, vary from one to the next.

James refuses to have his child be "a hostage of child support." Ralph has had difficulties maintaining a relationship with his adolescent daughter. Jim has used a spreadsheet to document his income before the court, and shares it with the others. He pulls out a copy of his petition to the Supreme Court regarding false accusations made of him in custody hearings.

The two adolescent fathers, Marco and Steve, say very little, until they are urged to speak. They live in Santa Maria, a rural farming community 70 miles north of Santa Barbara. One has established paternity and has physical custody of his child; the other is waiting to become a father—his girlfriend is still pregnant. They are, of course, concerned about being fathers, but they are also concerned about being adolescents and students, and gaining the skills they need to become good fathers.

Seeking Solutions for Diverse Families

The Fatherhood Coalition was created for the same reasons many programs have sprouted up around the country: high rates of father absence, out-of-wedlock births, and single motherhood, and their associated risks for children. But the Fatherhood Coalition is not a program—it is a coalition of program staff, program administrators, father and family advocates, and researchers, convened by the Santa Barbara Regional Health Authority, who are examining the many facets of fatherhood to better serve families.

The Fatherhood Coalition's members are working to achieve the following goals:

- To identify and minimize societal beliefs and behaviors that undermine the family by undermining the positive involvement of the father.
- To support societal beliefs and behaviors that reinforce fathering as essential to building strong families.
- To explore, understand, and educate the community about fatherhood issues.
- To assist and encourage men in nurturing and supporting their children.
- To foster male mentoring relationships.
- To foster respectful and caring relationships between mothers and fathers.
- To foster healing of those wounds which interfere with the ability of men to father in a loving, committed, and joyful manner.

While they have not developed a public policy cure-all or a "bulletproof" service delivery system that includes all fathers, the members of the Fatherhood Coalition have taken the step that they say all communities and programs that seek to creatively promote paternal involvement should take: they collaborate and learn from each other.

The Coalition holds monthly meetings at which Coalition members make group decisions and share information, learn about local resources, and listen to talks related to fatherhood, family, men's issues, and men's services. The location of the meetings alternates between north and south Santa Barbara County. A steering committee made up of Coalition members also meets monthly to set agendas for the general meetings, plan the Coalition's activities, and make consensus decisions to provide guidance for the Coalition.

Coalition members are organized into work groups that plan and implement projects on an as-needed basis. Current groups deal with teen issues and mentoring, community education and policy issues, and technical resource sharing and data collection.

The Fatherhood Coalition has grown from 30 to more than 70 members. As their collaborative effort has grown, so has their ability to meet the needs of fathers and families. Members of the coalition say that any community that seeks to promote fathering must also set broad goals and be inclusive to any ideas, as long as the objective associated with those ideas is child-centered. Failure to do so will do much more than keep the five diverse fathers from sitting at the same table; it will stifle individual program growth and fragment resources, allowing real change in programs and policies to remain elusive.
—D.A.

The Fatherhood Coalition can be reached c/o Santa Barbara Regional Health Authority, 720-B Santa Barbara St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101, 805/963-9261, ext. 217 (phone), 805/963-1672 (fax).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

How Programs Are Advocating for Father-Friendly Systems

by Dwaine Simms and Elizabeth Sandell

Photo: Keith Strickland

"What you are to us is an open checkbook. Nothing else!" This statement addressed to an unwed father was not made by the child support-seeking mother of his child, but by a judge. The father had just spent his most recent paycheck on filing a motion against the mother of his child for preventing him from seeing the child despite the court's visitation order.

This comment captures the American legal system's apparent belief that men do not want to be involved with their children. It is this attitude that is leading family support programs across the country to work even harder to bring fathers together with their children. One program targets specific communities and sends married couples door-to-door to identify and establish a relationship with every young father they encounter. The couples model relationship building and parenting skills for these fathers, who practice the skills while being involved in their own children's upbringing.

Another program buys out "sleaze services" and adult bookstores, converts them to light industry sites, and provides jobs for previously unemployed fathers who are from the neighborhood. In addition to gaining self-esteem from working, the fathers are given time during the working day to take parenting classes and join support groups.

A comprehensive employment service provides a nominal stipend to young fathers while they receive training prior to employment. During and after the training period the dads also take part in a parenting support group.

A Minnesota county is offering training on how to include fathers in work with families; the training is provided to child support workers, social workers who provide home-based services, probation officers, and school officials. Another county in that state is making it mandatory that those who work with adolescent mothers also notify the county's department of social services to open files for the fathers. West Virginia has increased its rate of paternity establishment by 45 percent by training maternity nurses who work in birthing hospitals to expect unwed fathers to establish paternity.

None of these efforts to encourage father involvement have become implemented without facing numerous systemic barriers, such as the attitude so clearly articulated by the South Carolina judge. It has been known for years that child support is more likely to be paid when the father has protected access to his child. Yet the process of involving unwed fathers in their children's lives in many counties, such as Ramsey County, Minnesota, begins with paternity establishment and ends with child support. Reasonable visitation isn't "visited" at all. Courts have even put children into the custody of abusive mothers rather than involving fathers in the children's care.

What Fathers Need, And How Programs Can Help Them Get It

Program evaluation data suggest that fathers want a place to explore their manhood, rights of passage, and fatherhood. They want and need to hear that it is okay to choose to nurture a baby over running with friends. Programs across the country are responding to fathers' needs by building their skills in problem solving, so that they feel comfortable talking with their children, rather than fighting and using violence with their children.

Some of the most telling markers of progress among family support programs that serve fathers are the stories of the fathers who participate. In MELD's support groups for young dads, the men speak about their own fathers in ways that are entirely new to them. Like other fathers throughout the country, they are recognizing that they can break the cycle of poor child-parent relationships despite the current unfairness of systems that are meant to serve children and families.

Fathers are unsure of the difference that programs can make. Many have come to view the systems in which they are involved and, by association, related programs as the enemy, not as sources of help. It will take time and additional resources to draw fathers into programs and then assist them in managing their lives and being involved in their families. It is important that family support programs communicate with fathers by lauding responsible fathers and visibly challenging systems that purport to be family-focused, but are not.

Fathers themselves are taking positions in the family support field and showing by their example that systems can change. The father addressed by the judge at the beginning of this article began organizing other fathers in his community to change courts' treatment of fathers as solely sources of income, not as nurturers, for their children.

Dwaine Simms is Program Replication Manager and Elizabeth Sandell is Executive Director of MELD, 123 N. Third St., Suite 507, Minneapolis, MN, 55401, 612/332-7563 (voice/TTY), or 612/344-1959 (fax).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Child Development: The Difference a Dad Makes

by Kyle D. Pruett

Photo: Marilyn Nolt

Fathers and babies have more to do with each other in the 1990s than in many previous decades. The dramatic movement into the work force by women of childbearing years, the softening of sexual stereotypes subsequent to the women's movement, and the expressed longing among men for deeper relationships in their lives than those provided by the workplace have all conspired to bring men into closer contact with their babies, whether they want it or not. Research on father-infant transactions has challenged the long-held belief that the most important thing a father can do for his child is to love its mother. Fathers have a direct, significant influence on the development of the infant.

How Children Benefit When Fathers are Involved

Research shows that children's social, physical, and intellectual development benefit greatly from the involvement of fathers, in addition to mothers, in their upbringing. Infants' scores on certain assessments of intellectual and motor development are higher if a father has been actively involved during the first six months of the child's life than if he has not been so involved. Babies also have been found to be more socially responsive if their fathers have been involved in their everyday physical care during the first two months of life. These babies also seem to disintegrate less in the face of distressing situations.

From the father, the infant learns that a person can care for him or her and yet differ from the mother in smell, size, strength, sound, appearance, and handling style. It is also through the father that the infant learns that comings and goings, separations and reunions are part not only of maternal nurturing but of non-maternal nurturing. This can be an important factor in helping children resolve the sleep disturbances in the second year of life, because the father's comforting the upset child in the middle of the night does not require working through yet another separation from the mother.

Both of these effects are mediated not so much by the amount of time fathers spend with children but, rather, what they do with the time they spend with their children. A number of researchers in the 1980s found that the number of hours fathers spent with their children was not always directly related to the quality of fathering measured through warmth, responsiveness to the child, support for the child's affiliation and autonomy or attentiveness. The child's psychological well-being is more directly associated with the quality of fathering than the quantity. Much child development research confirms that the total hours of paternal involvement are less important than how those hours are spent and, ultimately, how the time is evaluated by the child, the father, and—not surprisingly—the mother.

Father involvement may also have a direct effect on the medical integrity of the child from very early in the child's life. The 1973 British hospital labor dispute which led to so many physicians being on strike offered a rare opportunity to observe fathers' presence during home deliveries. In this rather unusual (at least for the late 20th century) circumstance, many mothers and fathers who were not ideologically or mentally prepared for home birth were faced with no alternative. When all of the factors that complicate normal birth, such as the mother being over the age of 30,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

diabetic risk, and primipara status were analyzed, the factor that most mitigated birth complication and further illness in the child and mother was the father's presence and aid at the birth.[2] A 1982 study concludes that father presence "reduces the terror, loneliness, sensory deprivation, and confusion of labor, especially protracted labor, resulting in decreased birth complications."[3]

A variety of studies have articulated a relationship between the father's interactional style and cognitive development of preschool children. Radin and Russell report that boys' contact with their fathers promotes intellectual development; these fathers model modes of thinking and problem-solving, which their sons internalize. In addition, cognitive development in boys is negatively affected by paternal restrictiveness, hostility, and authoritarian discipline and control. The positive relationship between paternal contact and cognitive development is less strong for girls, although it is present in some studies.[4] One study shows a positive association between fathers' involvement and their preschool-age daughters' competence in mathematics.[5]

Father Involvement Decreases Violence and Abuse

Current research reveals a dramatic finding regarding the relationship between father-infant care and subsequent sexual abuse of children. Hilda and Seymour Parker of the University of Utah did a comparative study of 56 men who were known to have sexually abuse their daughters and 54 men who had no known child sexual abuse in their backgrounds. There was a significant correlation between the lack of involvement in child care and nurturance and child abuse. Overall, stepfathers abuse children at a considerably higher rate than natural fathers. However, when comparing stepfathers who have been involved in nurturing their stepdaughters during the first three years of life with natural fathers who were similarly involved, we find no significant difference in sexual abuse rates. The higher rate of stepfathers' sexual abuse of daughters appeared related to their higher rate of absence and lack of opportunity to nurture during the critical reciprocity of the early years. It is safe to conclude that a man's involvement in the physical care of a child prior to the age of three, whether the child is his own or someone else's, significantly reduces the probability that that man will be involved later in the sexual abuse of any child. It is clear that humanization of both fathering and of the child, which is inherent in daily physical care of the child, erects a strong barrier against later exploitation of parent-child intimacy.

Fathers' involvement also helps curb violence by eliminating the rage that many male children (and later male adults) feel and express toward women. Concern for men as perpetrators of violence has laced American society for hundreds of years. Certainly, men kill each other in staggering numbers in wars, gang violence, and increasingly common but still random criminal acts. Many of these men are, of course, fathers, and much of their violence is directed at women, often in crimes of passion. Traditional adherence to stereotypical views of male and female sex roles encourages men to believe that they need to be naturally dominant.

Many families rely on exclusively maternal care. In these families, infants experience the mother as the sole, omnipotent, life-giving figure of their infancy. A child whose mother is set up in such a way and is at some point unable to meet the child's needs is likely to develop strong feelings of rage against her. Male participation in child rearing and nurturing tends to decrease unconscious rage against women by making it easier for women to satisfy their children's needs. "The woman who is completely without emotional or financial support from her child's father has the hardest task and runs the greatest risk of incurring her son's rage," writes Miedzian. Also, a mother who receives no support, such as many teen mothers, is likely to project onto the son the rage she feels toward the father (and often toward her own abusive, neglectful, non-present, and/or non-nurturing father). Miedzian suggests that the most useful way to reduce male violence is to normalize male-child contact through: (1) teaching men childrearing; (2) teaching conflict resolution in schools, and (3) presenting boys with role models of pro-social, nurturing males. A present, involved father is the best such role model.

An In-Depth Study

In an effort to understand the depth of the impact of the nurturing capacities and instincts on the development of children, I began a longitudinal prospective study of the development of children in intact families who were raised primarily by fathers. The study began with the developmental assessment of a group of these infants, who were two to 24 months old. Seventeen families were recruited from the area around a large New England industrial and academic community near the Yale Child Study Center, and represented the entire socioeconomic spectrum, including those receiving federal assistance, blue-collar

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

workers, white-collar workers, and professionals.

The fathers were interviewed extensively at home while they were in the act of caring for their children. Detailed histories were taken about their lives, their families of origin, their parents, their growing up, and their previous experience with children. All seventeen had been raised in father-headed homes in which mothers raised children and cared for the home. They had all expected that they would fulfill the expected role of protector and provider, and few even considered fathering as an important role.

The babies were the object of more formal assessment than were their parents. The first standardized assessment was conducted at the Child Development Unit of the Yale Child Study Center after observations based on a home visit had been recorded and data had been collected. The children were typically accompanied to the testing session by the mother and the father, who observed the administration of the Yale Developmental Schedule. The children's performance was that of an active, vigorous, robust group of thriving children. They were competent and occasionally functioned somewhat above the expected norms of several of the standardized tests. The youngest groups of infants ranging from two to twelve months performed several problem-solving tasks on the level of babies who were sometimes two to four months their senior. Personal and social skills were also ahead of schedule. The older babies in the group (12 to 22 months) performed as well. These infants seemed to be attracted to and especially comfortable with stimulation from the external environment.

They also seemed to expect that their diligence and curiosity would be appreciated and certainly tolerated by the adults in their environment. They seemed to expect that play would be rich, interesting, exciting, and reciprocated by the adults in the room. It was as though there was little in the world that could not yield to these children eventually.

As we looked at the data from the first year, it was clear that the children were thriving and developing well. We could conclude therefore—at least from this first year—that the children were growing and developing competently and that primary nurturing father care seemed not to be dangerous to the health of the infant or toddler. It also seemed clear that these men had achieved a deep reciprocally nurturing attachment so critical to the early development of the thriving human infant. The depth and rapidity of the attachment often amazed the fathers themselves. The way that it happened of course varied from family to family. But how are we to explain this slightly better than expected performance? I would speculate that the children were benefitting from the abiding commitment of two deeply involved parents. These women were actively involved in the physical and emotional care of their children when they were home in the evenings and on weekends. Sixteen of the seventeen mothers breast-fed for at least three months, even after returning to work.

It is important to reiterate that these fathers did not consider themselves to be "mothering." They were "fathering" in a way which mattered deeply to them. In a relatively short period of time, these fathers had abandoned the mental portrait of themselves as being stand-ins for their wives. This permitted their own unique nurturing styles to emerge, allowing the men to begin thinking of themselves as parents in their own right and not merely substitutions for mothers. The developmental competence of the babies clearly suggests that this is not a second-class operation.

This study and other research suggest that it is the characteristics of the father as a parent—rather than the characteristics of the father as a man—which appear to influence child development positively. Lamb describes the warmth of the relationship; how the father uses discipline and humor; and instructional style as being the most useful mediators for positive paternal involvement.[6]

The early results of the longitudinal study, and the follow-up data collected after 10 years, corroborate the findings of the research reviewed throughout this article: men can and most often should be involved in the care of their children. One father summed up the healing power of his involvement with this child in this way: "The more experience I have loving Allen and being involved in his growing up, the more my old hurts about my father and his distance from me seem to heal. Funny—I thought it would be the other way around—you know, make it worse, rather than better. It's better the way it is between Allen and me."

Kyle Pruett, M.D., is clinical professor of psychiatry at the Yale Child Study Center, P.O. Box 3333, New Haven, CT, 06510, 203/453-3632. He is director of training at the Provence-Harris Child Development Unit.

Notes

[1] PARKE, R. (1981) Fathers. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press).

[2] RICHMAN, J. (1982) Men's experiences of pregnancy and childbirth. In L. McKee and M. O'Brien, eds. The father figure. (London: Tavistoch Publications) 97.

[3] RICHMAN, J. (1982) Men's experiences of pregnancy and childbirth. In L. McKee and M. O'Brien, eds. The father figure. (London: Tavistoch Publications) 89–104.

[4] EPSTEIN, A., and N. RADIN (1975) Motivational components related to father behavior and cognitive functioning in preschoolers. Child Development 46: 831–839.

[5] RADIN, N. (1975) "Observed paternal behavior and the intellectual functioning of preschool boys and girls." Presented at SRCD annual meeting, Denver, Col.

[6] LAMB, M. (1986) The father's role. (New York: Wiley).

Resource on Fathers

The Nurturing Father

by Kyle Pruett

1987 (New York: Warner Books, 212/522-7200).

A ground–breaking study of the impact on children, mothers, and fathers when fathers take on the primary child–rearing role.

Parents' Group is a Resource for Fathers (and Mothers)

Mar Vista Family Center

Photo: Jean Berthon

It's an all-too-unusual sight at a family resource center: a parents' group that consists of both women and men in equal numbers, working together to strengthen their family skills. How did Mar Vista Family Center, in Culver City, California, start a parents' group that both mothers and fathers in the community find useful and comfortable? They started with the fathers.

How They Did It

For almost 20 years, the Mar Vista Family Center has provided critical support for the families living in and around the Mar Vista Housing Projects of west Los Angeles. Starting with a preschool that served just six families and now serves more than 500, the founders of the center had always hoped to turn the program over to the community because, according to Director Lucia Diaz, "It is theirs."

Like many other family support programs, Mar Vista at first was unable to serve a significant portion of their community: fathers. "It was kind of difficult," recalled Diaz. "I have always had a vision of having fathers here. We were always talking about how great it would be to have fathers here, but no one was doing anything about it," she said. "So I decided to do something about it."

Diaz knew that her intentions alone wouldn't result in fathers knocking down the door. First she needed to gain the support of some of the men in the community. "I started talking with some of the fathers, letting them know what I wanted to do. I talked with my husband. I asked them to support me with this idea," said Diaz.

Once she had some personal and community support, Diaz found someone to facilitate the group that she envisioned. After six fathers had signed up and the group had begun meeting, Diaz thought her vision was well on its way to being realized. However, she soon found the fathers growing disinterested and unable to effectively organize their meetings. "We had [a leader] and it was working, but something happened. I don't know, it just started to go down. The men asked me to come back and be with them," said Diaz. "So I was a woman leading a fathers' group."

The Fathers' Group Becomes a Parents' Group

Although Diaz found it easy facilitating a men's group ("It's just talking to a group of people, sharing with them what I know and learning with them at the same time"), others in the community thought it would be hard for men to truly talk about the issues that they needed to talk about in front of a woman. Not true.

The fathers had no problem having a woman as their facilitator. With Diaz's husband in the group, the fathers benefited from seeing the couple model effective ways of openly discussing the questions with which they, too, were struggling: How do we communicate with our teenaged children? How can we discipline our kids effectively? How can husbands express their feeling to their wives? How can the entire family be involved in problem solving?

Once the other fathers saw how Diaz and her husband could work on communicating their ideas and opinions to each other, they

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

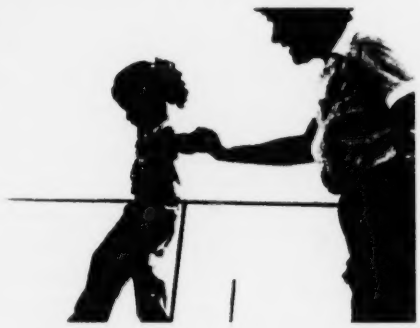
said, "We need our wives here too." According to Diaz, the problems that the fathers brought up all had to do with one main issue: communication. The men kept everything inside, and if they were going to let it out, having their wives there to participate in that communication was the best thing.

The fathers' comments make it clear that these meetings are important to them and to their marriages: "I'm learning how to work with my wife, my kids. ... Coming to meetings relaxes me. ... We do good things for our community. ... We've cleaned up the community, gotten rid of graffiti. ... It's been useful. ... I learn new things, positive things."

José and Alejandra

Tonight is José and Alejandra's first time sitting in the circle of parents. By far the youngest couple, their energy level seems higher at the end of this long day than that of the others. The men are attentive, but fight off the sleep that their bodies need after a long day of work. The women look equally tired, and work hard to keep a smile even when it's not their turn to read their responses to the day's question: What makes a team a good team? How does your family work together as a team? When José and Alejandra take their turn, they look uneasy, and never turn to face the rest of the group. But the other parents understand, and welcome the young couple with smiles and nods of approval: "It is good that you start so young," says someone from across the room.

Once the circle breaks, the parents talk over coffee and cookies before heading home. The fathers and mothers show photographs of their children in their soccer uniforms, and comment on how far the



center and the group have come. One father, Miguel, says, "We try to deal with actual problems, whether they are in the community, the homes, or in the family. If you and your family are going to be better off, that is the main thing." Alejandra says it took José a long time to agree to come to meetings at the Mar Vista Family Center. When asked why, José says, "Well, I did like the fact that my wife came over here; our kids go to the preschool. But, you know, it was the macho thing. I was like, 'I got other things to do.' Eventually, I realized it is better to come here than be on the street; it's better for our children."
—D.A.

Mar Vista Family Center is at 5070 Slauson Ave., Culver City, CA 90230, 310/390–9607 (phone) 310/390-3097 (fax).

Resource on Fathers

Getting Men Involved: Strategies for Early Childhood Programs

by James A. Levine, Dennis T. Murphy, and Sherrill Wilson

1993 (Scholastic Inc.)

Available from FRC: 312/341-0900

This workbook shows early childhood programs how they can encourage and support men in becoming active fathers and care-givers. Also includes portraits of 14 successful programs and a list of programs that work with fathers and materials on fathers.

FATHER TO FATHER

by Al Gore

I am blessed. I have wonderful childhood memories of experiences with my father, and he and I continue to share in each other's lives.

As a child, I remember seeing my father's strong hands guiding the birth of a calf, the sound of his voice auctioning a steer, and his no-nonsense expectations that my sister and I would behave according to the rules he and my mother had clearly established. In the past two years, I have watched him beaming with unabashed pride at the graduations of two of our daughters, as he has at every major milestone in his grandchildren's lives.

But there are many children who have no memories of their fathers. Forty percent of America's children will remember living in a home without their biological father. There are many who will remember a courageous single mother, and others who will not remember any adults who gave them the love they crave.

We are understandably outraged by the fathers who turn their backs on the children they have helped to create and leave them destitute. But even those who provide financial support frequently, intentionally or not, abandon their children emotionally.

Many devoted fathers who want to provide good lives for their children are stretched beyond the limits of exhaustion by the demands of two or more jobs, or long hours and longer commutes. Many fathers I talk with are frustrated by the lack of time that they have to spend with their children, and confess that when they do get home, they may just collapse in front of the TV, too tired to hear about the fight on the playground, or help with the homework, or read the bedtime story. A recent poll found that 72 percent of fathers would like to spend more time with their children.

Too often American society equates "parenthood" with motherhood, ignoring the role of fathers, or presupposing their absence. Too often institutions that claim to support families—schools, workplaces, religious organizations, health and welfare agencies—assume that fathers are not available, not involved, and not interested in giving or receiving support.

We need to mobilize fathers to solve the problem of fatherlessness. We must find ways to change our culture so that men are encouraged to spend more time with their children, and we must support men in their resolve to be more involved in their children's lives.

I am convinced that there is nothing more essential to a successful father than the active support of other fathers. That is why I am so proud to serve as Honorary Chairman of Father to Father, an initiative I suggested two years ago that has been transformed from an idea into a reality by leaders in the fatherhood and family support fields. This national non-governmental initiative is now uniting men with one another in the task of becoming better fathers.

Father to Father is founded on certain shared beliefs:

- ALL men need support in the difficult task of being a good father.
- Both children AND fathers benefit in a reciprocal way from good fathering.
- All fathers involved in Father to Father will benefit from each other in a reciprocal relationship.
- Men must help each other to support the mothers of their children and to be active partners in parenting regardless of the status of their personal relationship with the mother.
- Connecting fathers with their children connects them in a productive way with their communities.

What does Father to Father look like in practice? In Minnesota, for example, which has launched a statewide initiative, more than 50 organizations have now begun to work together in supporting fathers. For example:

- Eight school districts are beginning Father to Father mentoring programs by recruiting volunteers from among the dads who participate in their Early Childhood Family Education classes.
- One district is developing a training program for volunteers and "Daddy Kits" to provide information and activities for dads and kids of various ages and stages.
- A church-affiliated father support program will offer wage and rent subsidies to men who participate in their father to father initiative.
- The University of Minnesota is developing a network of peer educators to reach out to students who are fathers.
- In one rural county the schools, public health and social service agencies, and the Minnesota Extension service have formed a "Partners in Parenting" collaborative to support young dads.
- A major health care provider is planning a Father to Father program for new dads as a part of their "total pregnancy care" initiative.
- A spiritual counseling center is making father support a new priority, bringing diverse groups of dads together for retreats to explore spiritual issues and fatherhood.
- An urban family support program is organizing fathering forums, bringing together African-American grandfathers, fathers, and youth to create a strong community of men.
- Leaders of existing father support programs have volunteered their time to develop and disseminate a directory of father support services, as well as training resources for other organizations that want to reach out to dads in new ways.

I urge all fathers and groups who care about fathers to join in the Father to Father effort. Through Father to Father, we will affirm and celebrate the uniqueness of fatherhood and the power of shared parenting.

Together we can work to reconnect men and children. Our nation's fathers are depending on us.

Al Gore is Vice President of the United States. For a Father to Father Community Starter Kit, you can call 612/626-1212, fax 612/626-1210, or log on to the FatherNet Web site at http://www.cyfc.umn.edu/FatherNet.htp.

Public Policy and Poor, Unwed Fathers: Case Studies Show Dads Aren't "Deadbeats"

by Daniel Ash

Photo: Keith Strickland

The faces of poor, unwed fathers all tell similar stories. Some of their tales are just beginning: the stories of pain and confusion of young adolescent fathers who are vilified by parents, grandparents, and teachers for getting so-and- so pregnant. Others' stories have long moved past that rude introduction and on to a plot that seems forever depressing: fathers in their twenties and older, who are unable to support their children. These fathers hear many people say their children "should never have come into this world with such a weak daddy." The refrain, "I knew you would mess up—you're just like your father," rings constantly in their ears and shows on their faces.

This condemnation takes its toll. They come to expect judgement and lectures on responsibility. And from the government, they expect to be discouraged from involvement in their children's lives. Why do current policies have this effect? And how can policy be constructed and enforced in a way that encourages male involvement? The Center on Fathers, Families, and Public Policy decided to ask the people whose answers to these questions are rarely sought: poor, unwed fathers.

The Center on Fathers, Families, and Public Policy (CFFPP) has interviewed 71 fathers. The Center's goal was to explore from the ground up the impact of public policy on low-income, never-married, noncustodial fathers. One needs only to look at census data and income studies to see that most fathers of children receiving welfare are poor, jobless, and in a financially precarious state overall. The findings of the project are not startling: the fathers are poor and struggling, the mothers are poor and struggling, and the children are, despite the parents' need to claim otherwise, dependent on both mother and father. But because the data is based on interviews, it provides an extremely rare opportunity to take the crucial first step of crafting effective, fair policies that encourage father involvement: understanding the real-life implications of many well-intended policies. These fathers were asked to talk about the responsible things they already do for their children, and what keeps them from doing more.

How Does the Law Discourage Father Involvement?

She got pregnant, you see, and we was still in high school. We were a good couple, so I wasn't too pressed about it; I was 18, she was 17. I graduated from high school (I could've done better), but I couldn't find any work. We moved in together when she got on [AFDC], and I was working fast food. I didn't want her to lie, but we could-n't afford it otherwise, you know, rent and other stuff. I know it was wrong—her lying about it and all—but what was I supposed to do? She been good about it, she hasn't gave them nothing on me, and she's been on [AFDC] for four years . . .

—Father, age 22

Baltimore, Maryland

With little or no marketable education or skills, the poor, unwed fathers that CFFPP interviewed operate on the margins, away from their families and their children. In some ways, the most tragic part is that many of the factors that drive these fathers to the margin are beyond their control. Here's why: current public policy that governs income and social support programs has systematically ignored the needs of low-income men who have fathered children outside of marriage. Moreover, it has created a situation in which poor, unmarried couples with children are better off if they don't live together as a family—or if they say they don't. Contrary to popular rhetoric, neither the father nor the mother in the overwhelming majority of these couples is morally capricious, deciding to have children one minute and then choosing to ignore their needs the next. Instead, these couples react rationally to public policy constraints by not marrying and not establishing legal paternity; they do what they have to do in order to maximize the resources available to them and their children.

How Do Families Cope With the Law?

Can't nobody tell me I don't do for my kid. Now, I know I don't pay [through the government]—why should I? But I do do for him. You see, I want my boy to know that I paid for his shoes, his clothes—not the state of California.

—Father, age 28

Los Angeles, California

Photo: Kevin Fitzsimons

There is a pattern that emerges from the ways in which poor, unwed couples respond to the system. The mother, acting as the custodial parent, applies for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and other support services on behalf of herself and the children. Upon doing so, the mother is expected to cooperate with the agency that administers the state's AFDC program by revealing the identity and whereabouts of the biological father so that the state can issue a child support order, collect payment from the father, and issue checks to the mother. When a child is born outside of marriage, legal paternity must be established before the state will issue a child support order. The presumed father must be legally confirmed as the father either through a blood test or through mutual consent of the mother and father. For most parents who need AFDC support long-term, paternity is never established; the parents fear that the father will not be able to keep up payments, or, like the father quoted above, wish to avoid the illusion that the government, not the father, is paying child support. Another important reason that paternity is not established is that AFDC benefits are not granted if the parents live together. By keeping the father's identity a secret, couples protect against the state finding out that they live together and withdrawing benefits.

The father, as the noncustodial parent, does all he can, often with the help of the mother, to avoid ever establishing paternity. If paternity has been established, they do all they can to avoid the long arm of the child support enforcement office. These fathers are not "deadbeat dads"; conversely, they avoid establishing paternity either because they cannot pay, or because their families are better off when they provide support outside of the formal child support system.[1]

The net result of this collusion among low-income mothers and fathers is tragic. The couple's rational attempt to stabilize the fathers' role and maximize resources in many cases subjects the mother to the possibility of welfare fraud charges and losing all benefits. And the father, in many cases, lives in emotional exile from his family, because his presence would bring them financial hardship. Some fathers, having been taught early on that their role in the family is limited to that of the provider, voluntarily remove themselves from the family.

The Need for a New Paradigm

I just don't understand. I've been established as the father and I'm supposed to pay, but I lost my job when they closed my plant. I called the lady up at child support, and I told her what happened. She said, "Good, you're doing the right thing by calling us."

But I just found out I owe over $3,000 in back support, even though I've had no job. You know how I found out about it? When I was about to get hired working security, they ran me through consumer affairs, which said I was wanted for child support. I didn't get the job, they're not getting child support—who wins?

—Father, age 31

Los Angeles, California

Many people, including welfare advocates, view non-custodial fathers such as the one quoted above as opportunists; they say these fathers stay with the family at first, benefiting from the support that the mother receives on behalf of the children, but will eventually move on and ignore their financial and emotional responsibility to the mother and the children. On the other hand, a growing body of researchers, policy advocates, and social service practitioners see the father as the abandoned subject. In their view, the father, unable to qualify for public assistance of any kind, falls victim to a system that conspires to keep him disenfranchised from his family and the mainstream economy.

Although there are research findings that support each of these two views, there is a third option that has to be considered if policy related to poor, unwed fathers is to become famil-supportive.[2] In order to reach this middle ground, everyone concerned about survival of low- income, fragile families must first reconsider the assumptions that they make about both parents, especially the father. More specifically, we must acknowledge that although many fathers fail to establish paternity and thus never pay formal child support, and often have tenuous relationships with their children, they, like all parents, do in fact want to be a positive force in their children's lives.[3]

The goal of all social policies must be to support parents, irrespective of marital status, so that they can raise healthy children. Yet many concerned individuals who claim to be acting on the best interests of the child continue to propose policy with only two dimensions: support for one parent and enforcement measures for the other. The next wave of welfare reform debate must recognize the need for a three-dimensional policy, one that support custodial parents, providing enforcement when it is necessary, but is guided by a desire for the well-being of the family. For all low-income

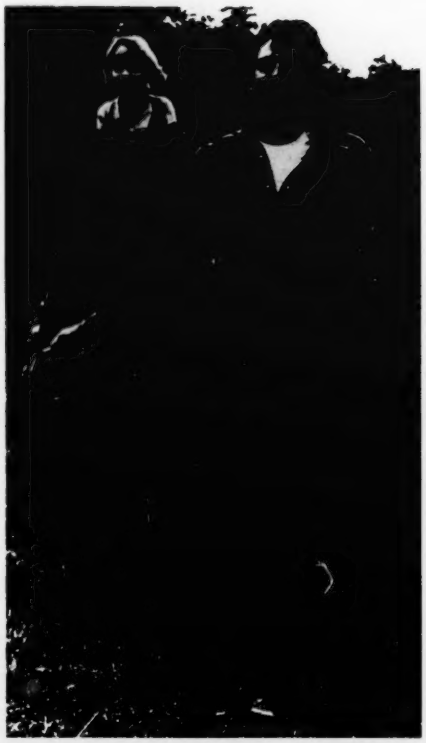


Photo: Marilyn Nolt

families, reaching this common ground is critical.

Solutions: A Policy Option

The mother, she's been having problems, so I've had the girl for about six months now. And I went down to social services, with my baby girl—so they could really see that I had her—and said, "Look I have her, can I get on aid?" They said no. I don't care. I don't need them.

—Father, age 22

Baltimore, Maryland

In order for child support agencies to be truly effective for low-income families, they must be more creative in their attempts at reaching low-income men. As previously noted, the never-married father has no legal responsibility for his children until paternity is established. And to low-income, never-married fathers, paternity establishment is the trap door for child support enforcement. Therefore the paternity establishment rate for AFDC-dependent families has stayed consistently low, even with the advent of streamlined, administrative procedures for paternity establishment, such as establishing paternity in the hospital upon the child's birth.[4]

This reality has frustrated policymakers who view child support enforcement as a vital link to other anti-poverty strategies. Consequently, the designers of the most recent welfare reform proposals have sought to subject the custodial parent to stiffer sanctions if they are deemed uncooperative because they refuse to help identify and locate the biological father. In addition, present proposals attempt to put more pressure on state child support enforcement agencies by setting mandatory paternity establishment rates. Currently proposed federal welfare reform would require that each state establish paternity for at least 90 percent of children born in the next five years. If states failed to meet this goal, they would lose part of their federal block grants. Obviously, many policymakers feel that punitive measure are the only way to increase paternity establishment rates for AFDC families. They're wrong.

Most of the fathers who participated in the CFFPP case study said that paternity establishment is not something they fear. What they do fear is life after paternity establishment: "What if I can't pay anymore?" wondered one father. "What if I can't afford the order they give me? I heard about a guy who, after they took out his [child] support, only took home $75 a week. That is not going to happen to me, no way."

A number of local programs and demonstrations projects have shown that fathers establish paternity if they have some guarantee that they will be able to manage the entire process and the risks that can accompany it.[5] All of the fathers interviewed by CFFPP indicated that enhanced paternity establishment--a guarantee that when they establish paternity they will have access to education and training opportunities, job placement assistance, parenting classes, and assistance in dealing with child support enforcement officials--would turn them around on the issue of paternity establishment. An important part of family-supportive child support enforcement is providing advocates to accompany fathers through difficulties. Although most fathers indicated that securing stable employment was their main priority, more than 75 percent said they would establish paternity and pay child support if they had someone representing them during the process, someone of whom they could ask questions without fearing negative repercussions for themselves and their families.

Of course, much more than paternity establishment, enhanced or otherwise, is needed to truly meet the needs of low-income fathers and their families. If future public policy initiatives are to be constructive and sustaining to all families, a new paradigm must emerge in which each member of the family is seen as an individual, yet as crucial to the viability of the whole. Moreover, we must begin to challenge our assumptions about low-income, noncustodial fathers, and to move beyond our biases regarding what they can or should contribute to the family. The first step to accomplishing this task is for each of us to disassociate the monolithic, grotesque image of the "deadbeat dad" from the many fathers who have little to no choice concerning their reality, their story.

Daniel Ash is Policy Analyst for the Center for Fathers, Families, and Public Policy; Family Resource Coalition, 200 S. Michigan Ave., 16th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604, 312/341-0900.

Notes

[1]EDIN, K. Single mothers and absent fathers: The possibilities and limits of child support policy. (New Brunswick, NJ.: Rutgers University).

[2]SORENSON, E. (1994) "Noncustodial fathers: Can they afford to pay more child support?" (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute).

NICHOLS-CASEBOLT and KLAWITTER (1989) Child support enforcement reform: Can it reduce the welfare dependency of families of never-married mothers? Discussion Paper #895-89. (Madison, Wis.: Institute for Research on Poverty).

[3]KELLEY, M., and C. COLBURN (1995) "Economically disadvantaged African American fathers: Social policy and fathering." Journal of African American Men.

[4]CENTER FOR POLICY RESEARCH The child support improvement project: Paternity establishment. (Denver, Colorado).

[5]The most comprehensive listing of "model" programs that address paternity establishment is in LEVINE, J. and E. PITT. (1995) New expectations: Community strategies for responsible fatherhood (New York: Families and Work Institute).

Resource on Fathers

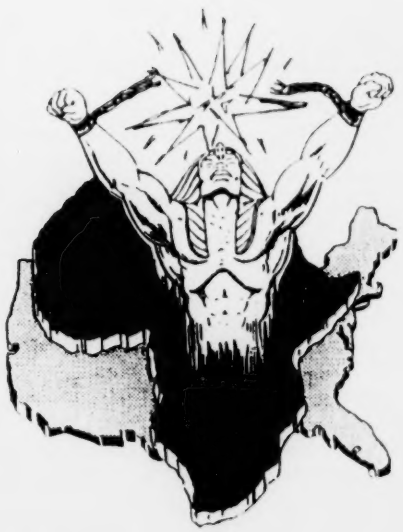
Circles of Care and Understanding: Support Programs for Fathers of Children With Special Needs

by James E. May

1992 (Bethesda, Md.: Association for Care of Children's Health, 301/654-6549)

A practical guidebook on how to develop a support program for fathers whose children have special needs.

Bringing Home Better Communication: Fathers' and Mothers' Groups Work Together in Baltimore



Tonight at Saint Bernadine's Head Start and Adult Learning Center, fathers are talking about how they can effectively communicate with and discipline their children. The fathers' way of expressing their positions is to tell stories: one describes how his mother calmly scolded him and explained what he did wrong; another says his father beat him on the buttocks so long and so hard that he would never again do what had brought on the punishment; another's grandfather scolded him by telling a story, a parable that he would never forget. When one of the fathers delves deep into his childhood, facilitator Henry Gregory and the other fathers allow him to explore freely, to digress if he has to, because they know that uncovering these memories of how he was raised will make him a better father—and that's what they're all here to achieve.

How the Fathers Found Each Other

The fathers say they owe much to the mothers involved in the Saint Bernadine Head Start and Adult Learning Center. According to executive director Sheila Tucker, in the early 80s, the women called for deliberate involvement of fathers in the center because they realized that it took both mothers and fathers to create a better environment for children. "The concept came from the women," said Tucker. "We wanted to create an environment where [women and men] could come together and talk about what needed to happen for their families to be empowered."

In 1981, staff began to actively work to get men to participate in the family life group. The women who had long participated in this group had gained confidence and were beginning to articulate their opinions, needs, and concerns—many of which had to do with having been abandoned by their children's fathers and left alone to raise kids in impoverished conditions. According to Tucker, the women's expression of these feelings in the group led to the new male participants feeling "under attack." At first, said Tucker, "it was a real hostile place for men." Little by little, they stopped coming.

Staff learned from the experience, and decided that the best way to involve the fathers in the center was to create a place where they felt safe, where their needs would be met. They started a weekly men's group and called it the Male Involvement Project.

Although many service providers think getting men to participate is the biggest hurdle in starting a fathers' group, this was not the case for the Saint Bernadine group. Fathers attended the weekly meetings right from the start. "The men were ready to share in a place where they were not going to be attacked and where they shared a kinship with other men," said Tucker.

Fathers took the group seriously, and took ownership of it by deciding together on some basic rules that they would follow, such as no drinking, no smoking, and no drug use during meetings. Although these rules may seem like a given for any viable family support program activity, setting them allowed the fathers to make a conscious decision about how they would function and relate to each other.

The fathers who regularly participate say they have evolved and grown as men. When James Worthy, Male Involvement Project Director, looks at the fathers, he sees "pride, men knowing and feeling capable, and men taking plans and putting them in action, implementing them—true healing." Many fathers have joined the group after hearing about it from participants. The fathers who attend the weekly meetings of the Male Involvement Project at Saint Bernadine's come because they want to be there. No one is mandated to attend.

Completing the Equation

The mothers have their separate meetings, the fathers have their separate meetings, so how does Saint Bernadine's Head Start and Adult Learning Center help families work together? The two groups meet jointly during the third week of every month. These joint sessions give the fathers and the mothers the opportunity to practice the communication skills that many of them are learning in their separate groups. Often, says Tucker, this means practicing the 50 percent of communication that too many of us could use some work on: listening. Tucker finds that many people, "especially if they are disagreeing, plan their responses before they've truly heard what the other party is saying." In their meetings, when group members want to respond to another's comments, they first repeat what that person has said, and give him or her the chance to confirm or correct their interpretation.

These communication skills allow fathers in the Male Involvement Project to share more effectively with each other and with their families. After saying a prayer and breaking from their weekly group, they all have a look of satisfaction on their faces. They've shared with each other. They've listened to each other. And they take these abilities home with them.
—D.A.

Saint Bernadine's Head Start and Adult Learning Center is at 3814 Edmondson Avenue, Baltimore, MD, 21229, 410/233-4500 (phone), 410/362-6720 (fax).

Fathers and Families: Building a Framework for Research, Practice, and Policy

by Vivian Gadsden

Photo: Marilyn Nolt

The resurgence of interest in and talk about families—from debates about welfare reform to discussions about family values—is part of a continually evolving and expanding discourse on changing family structures, parents' roles, and apparent threats to the well-being of children. The issue of fathers and fatherhood, once the focus of only a small strand of the field of family studies, has moved to the center, and represents a critical and meaningful area of inquiry for research efforts that aim to support children's development.

The burgeoning interest in fathers and families is occurring at a time when increasing numbers of children and families are likely to experience hardship and social vulnerability. Revisions in family support policies and the elimination of public assistance programs portend a difficult future for many children and families. Impending welfare reform measures are predicted to have dramatic and negative effects on many poor families who, despite the importance of work and the pervasiveness of joblessness among many mothers and fathers, require more than employment to make the transition to self-sufficiency.

Although research on fathers is increasing, the number of studies in this area is still relatively small. Much of the research examines questions about father absence and the impact of father involvement on the emotional, social, and financial well-being of children. Rather than replacing the mother-focused research on families, current research on fathers' roles seeks to understand better how fathers (particularly those of children living in poverty) contribute to the general quality of their children's lives. This research examines fathers' roles within and outside of conventional family forms, and how fathers might support mothers in daily parenting tasks and care of children.

The effects of father absence are not the sole concern of the research; also important are the issues related to child support and paternity establishment. These issues concern a range of fathers, such as noncustodial low-income fathers; fathers in diverse cultural and ethnic groups; and middle-class fathers. To address these issues, we must explore father-child attachment and cooperative parenting between fathers and mothers, including when fathers live outside the home. We must examine the nature of mothers' influence in children's lives and the ways in which fathers can support the mothers of their children effectively and in a non-adversarial manner. We must document the experiences of families who face chronic poverty, and those who are working toward economic security. In short, we must translate intellectual concerns into sound research, practice, and policy that ensure the healthy development of children, irrespective of the circumstances of their birth.

An Increasingly Vulnerable Population of Children and Parents

From a practical viewpoint, father absence matters. More than one-half of all children will live at least some portion of their formative years in a mother-only household. These children are six times more likely to be poor than children who live with both parents.[1] A parent of any age may find child rearing challenging and formidable in the absence of another parent or other sources of support. Many of these young parents are young, are raising children in poverty, and have few familial or community sources of support. Many find parenting and child rearing to be lonely experiences, and seek guidance and assistance to make the developmental transition into responsible parenting roles. The inherent stresses associated with single parenting and the practical advantages of having another parent or adult share the decision making and emotional responsibility for children are the focus of research across disciplines.[2]

The hardships and risks that these families face beg researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and advocates to ask and act on the question: Why do these children need forfeit their right to childhood and to our protection? A number of programs are showing that with the right support, they need not. But what is particularly striking

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Photo: Marilyn Nolt

about the research to date is the relatively limited exploration of these programs that provide support to young parents. These efforts, which include father-focused, mother-specific, and co-parenting programs are rich sources of information about the lives of young fathers and the needs of single-parent families. As recent reports from the Young Unwed Fathers Project and the Parents Fair Share Project suggest, programs and program participants provide insights into the personal and systemic barriers to father involvement.[3]

Core Learnings on Fathers and Families

Research and programs that deal with fathers and families can not be naive or inattentive regarding the impact, positive or negative, associated with facilitating father involvement, particularly when such involvement leads to adversarial or destructive familial relationships. Rather than simply asking what the negative effects of father absence are, the National Center on Fathers and Families[4] (NCOFF) has posed three questions:

1. What difference does it make when a father participates in his children's development, especially for children living in poverty and in environments with few role models of responsible fathering?

2. How does father participation make a difference? and

3. What will it take to make the necessary difference in the lives of children?

By seeking answers to these questions using practical knowledge from the field and theoretical frameworks from research, we can discover policy and programmatic approaches that increase family efficacy.

The experiences of practitioners in programs that serve fathers, mothers, and children, along with major current or emerging themes identified by researchers, have been synthesized by NCOFF into seven Core Learnings. It should be the task of researchers, including NCOFF, to test the assumptions that inform these ideas; support research that examines whether, how, how often, when, and to what degree the father behaviors described here occur within or outside of two-parent family households; and disseminate to the field data that contributes to the development of parents, children, and families. The Core Learnings are:

1. **Fathers care.** That fathers care is documented in a variety of reports and studies.[5] Father caring may assume many different forms—from emotional commitment to children's development to hands-on support in the home and responsibility for childcare. The research in this area is constrained, however, by a narrow focus on fathers in middle-class, well-educated, white, intact families.

2. **Father presence matters.** Research on father presence is scant, one exception being Smith and Morgan's (1994) study on the impact of father presence on adolescent girls' delay of sexual activity.[6] Studies on father absence, as is the case in other research on families, focus primarily on adjustment to divorce. The enduring effects of living in a single-parent, female-headed household are unclear, although a variety of negative outcomes for children are associated with father absence (e.g., poor school performance, low self-esteem, early sexual activity, and economic deprivation). Most studies offer little empirical evidence, and what exists is inconsistent regarding the quality of life for children and their mothers and the long-term effects of single parenting on children, mothers, and fathers.

3. **Joblessness is a major impediment to family formation and father involvement.** The role of father as financial provider for the family is often challenged by the real-life experiences of many young, low-income fathers who have neither employment skills nor access to work opportunities. When the normal venues to obtain work are unavailable or inaccessible, many fathers—particularly young fathers with few skills and little schooling—often either avoid the responsibility of supporting their children or turn to informal economies or unrecorded and untaxed work to provide the necessary income and establish credibility in their families.

4. **Existing approaches to public benefits, child support enforcement, and paternity establishment create obstacles and disincentives for father involvement.** Among many young fathers and the mothers of their children, systemic approaches to paternity establishment and child support enforcement activities are met with distrust and associated with punitive, rather than supportive, effects. The first contact between the institution and an absent parent is often through a phone message or letter; if that is ignored the parent is visited by a representative of the sheriff's office—an unwelcome sight in many communities.[7] Perhaps the greatest disincentives to paternity establishment are the high costs of processing and applications fees that are associated with going to court. These not only inhibit fathers from declaring paternity, but also deter women from initiating the process.

5. **A growing number of young fathers and mothers need additional support to develop the vital skills to share the responsibility for parenting.** Cooperative or shared parenting affirms that the child is pre-eminent in the family, even when parents are divorced, separated, or never married. Research on cooperative parenting has focused primarily on married, divorced, and separated couples. Programs serving low-income families often do not include issues of shared

parenting in their work. Research on the co-parenting program at the Philadelphia Children's Network shows that both young mothers and young fathers experience problems (such as those having to do with role transitions, social barriers and racial discrimination, low self-esteem, and families of origin) and are concerned for their children's well-being and future. Even if the two young parents share a household, however, they often form fragile families that have few of the educational, social, and economic resources that could support their efforts to cooperate as parents.

6. **The transition from biological father to committed parent has significant developmental implications for young fathers.** This transition falls under the category of role transition, which is the process of changing from one set of expected behaviors in a social system to another.[8] A role transition, which can include moving from the developmental stage to another, is accomplished when a person fulfills expectations associated with a particular period (such as school entry, high school graduation, marriage, childbearing, and parenting) and moves on to those of the next. When young fathers are inconsistent or inattentive to personal and family issues, they often are reacting to the difficulty of making the abrupt transition into fulfilling adult roles and assuming the responsibility that responsive parenting requires.

7. **The behaviors of young parents, both fathers and mothers, are influenced significantly by the intergenerational beliefs and practices of their families of origin.** Young parents' definitions of parenting and attitudes toward family life are influenced by the nature and structure of life within their families of origin, i.e., how they experienced childhood and family life. Research on family development suggests that families of origin, regardless of economic standing, influence the way their children will parent in many ways, and frame the experiences of young parents. They may be sources of strength or promoters of conflict. Regardless, they are powerful forces in young parents' decisions about how to raise their children, including their decisions about co-parenting efforts. Families of origin are the sources of "family cultures," including behaviors, cultural beliefs, life experiences, and self-regulatory practices.[9]

A Call for Collaboration

Research on fathers and families must begin with the assumption that parents, regardless of their income levels and membership in ethnic groups, share with their children the possibility of a relationship of trust. Both this relationship and the investment by parents, schools, communities, and society upon which the relationship is built are necessary to ensure the well-being and success of children. Researchers must demonstrate a commitment to research as a medium for advancing family support practice and for effecting change. Together, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers must collaborate both to envision and work toward enhanced possibilities for children and families, particularly those most vulnerable among us.

Vivian L. Gadsden, Ph.D., is the director of the National Center on Fathers and Families, University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education, 3700 Walnut St., Box 58, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6216, 215/686-3910 (phone), 215/686-3908 (fax). She is a professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

Notes

[1]NATIONAL COMMISSION ON CHILDREN (1991). Beyond rhetoric: A new American agenda for children and families. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office).

[2]CHASE-LANSDALE, P. L., J. BROOKS-GUNN, and R. PAIKOFF (1991) "Research and programs for adolescent mothers: Missing links and future promises." Family Relations 40, 396–404.

MCLOYD, V. C. (1990) "The impact of economic hardship on Black families and children: Psychological distress, parenting, and socioemotional development." Child Development 61, 311–346.

[3]ACHATZ, M. & C. A. MACALLUM (1994) Young unwed fathers: A report from the field. (Philadelphia: Private/Public Ventures).

BLOOM, D., and K. E. SHERWOOD (1994) Matching opportunities to obligations: Lesson from child support reform from the Parents Fair Share pilot phase. (New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation).

FURSTENBERG, F. F., K. SHERWOOD, and M. SULLIVAN (1992) Caring and paying: What fathers and mothers say about child support. (New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation).

[4]NCOFF was established in July 1994 as an interdisciplinary research center at the University of Pennsylvania with core funding from The Annie E. Casey Foundation and subsequent program support from The Ford Foundation. Its purpose is to implement a research agenda that is practice-focused and practice-derived, expand the knowledge base on father involvement and family development, and stimulate basic, applied, and policy research discussions in the field. Developed in the spirit of the Philadelphia Children's Network's (PCN) motto—"Help the children. Fix the system."—NCOFF's mission is to improve the life chances of children and the efficacy of families.

[5]BOWMAN, P. J. (1990) "Coping with provider-role strain: Adaptive cultural resources among Black husband-fathers." Journal of Black Psychology 16 (2), 1–21.

FURSTENBERG, F. F., Jr. and K. M. HARRIS (1993) "When and why fathers matter: Impacts of father involvement on the children of adolescent mothers." In R. Lerman and T. Ooms, eds., Young unwed fathers: Changing roles and emerging policies. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press) 117–138).

LAMB, M. E., A. M. FRODI, C. P. HWANG, and FRODI, M. (1982) "Varying degrees of paternal involvement in infant care: Attitudinal and behavioral correlates." In M. Lamb, ed., Non- traditional families: Parenting and child development. (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates).

[6]Eighteen documents that are based on NCOFF's research are available. Seven volumes comprise the NCOFF Research Database, each volume covers a different Core Learning and includes citation lists; annotated bibliographies; and abstracts of articles, reports, and books. Also available are critical literature reviews by scholars representing different disciplines and interests in fathers and families, working papers and monographs, recent book lists, book reviews, and issues of the periodically published Policy Perspectives.

[7]WATTENBERG, E. (1993) "Paternity actions and young fathers." In R. Lerman and T. Ooms, eds., Young unwed fathers: Changing roles and emerging policies. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press) 213–234.

[8]ALLEN, W. R., and E. VAN DE VLIERT, eds. (1984) Role Transitions: Explorations and explanations. (New York: Plenum Press).

[9]GADSDEN, V. L., and D. A. WAGNER, eds. (In press) Literacy among black youth: Issues in learning, teaching, and schooling (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press) 1–12.

Con Los Padres

Photo by Barbara Lopez

It seems too good to be true: The district attorney's office, a local community college, and the public school system all teaming up with a family resource center to provide services to young, unwed fathers. Not only is it true—it appears to be working for everyone involved, especially the young fathers.

The result of this collaboration is Con Los Padres (With the Fathers), and here's how it works: Bienvenidos Family Services, with the help of a number of school-based programs that serve pregnant and parenting young women, identifies fathers who are between the ages of 12 and 17 (or 18, if they're in high school). Once a young father is identified, Bienvenidos counselors tell him about Con Los Padres. Those who participate get thirty weeks of parenting classes, personal counseling, and educational and job training opportunities. Once a young father joins Con Los Padres and accepts legal responsibility for his child by registering with the office of the district attorney of Los Angeles county—the people in charge of child support enforcement—$50 per is paid to the mother (or other custodial adult) for each month that the father attends classes. Other incentives also encourage fathers to participate.

Sitting in on Con Los Padres

When you follow the path of your father you learn to walk like him.
—Native American proverb

Nine padres have made it to today's class, even though there's a driving rain storm in southern California. Each father enters quietly, acknowledges the others, and takes a position around the table of snacks. Long moments of silent eating are interrupted by brief neighborhood reports:

"Did you hear about ...?"
"Yeah, I heard about that ..."

When the fathers have had time to eat, drink, and relax, senior teen parent counselor and mentor Bobby Verdugo enters the room and says, "Let's get started." The fathers make their way to the couches. Seated, they look as if they were sitting in a home, in a place they trust.

Verdugo asks the young fathers if they have seen the article in the Los Angeles Times that features the program and pictures of them and the child of one of them. Most have seen the article: they, their mothers, and their girlfriends have clipped it. Some have been stopped by teachers and neighbors who said that they had seen it, and were proud of them.

This ice-breakers out of the way, Verdugo gets to the business at hand: the fathers are scheduled to discuss how they have learned about fatherhood through their culture, their community, and their family. Each father has a personal opinion of what being a good father is and is not, and this discussion provides an opportunity for them to examine their own parenting styles by describing the relationships they had with their own fathers or grandfathers. Many of them describe negative experiences, but the young fathers all are focused on their purpose for being in the class: to learn new ways, better ways, to be a father. One young father says, "My father is just sticking to his beer. 'When you're 18 you're out of here,' he says. He didn't even want to go to the hospital when I got [hurt]. You see, my mother has been both my mother and my dad. Who's teaching me how to be a dad? Me, myself, and my mom."

Real change doesn't happen overnight, and it will take time to determine the success and viability of this new program. Con Los Padres has the makings of success for the young fathers who continue to participate: incentives to participate, and counselors who care, listen, and understand that these fathers must define their own model of fatherhood, one that is drastically different from those they've seen and experienced.
—D.A.

Bienvenidos Family Services and Con Los Padres can be reached at 5233 East Beverly Blvd., East Los Angeles, CA 90022, 213/728-9577 (phone), 213/728-3483 (fax).

RESOURCE FILE

Fatherhood and Family Support

The following organizations provide resources and/or training to those who are interested in fatherhood and family support. Some provide direct services to fathers and families; others produce written materials. This list is adapted in part from *New Expectations: Community Strategies for Responsible Fatherhood* by James A. Levine and Edward W. Pitt.

Resource Organizations

Center on Fathers, Families, and Public Policy
Family Resource Coalition
200 South Michigan Avenue, 16th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604
312/341-0900 (phone)
312/341-9361 (fax)
Examines the legal and social service support systems available to never-married, low-skilled, and low-income fathers. Works to educate the public and policymakers about the need for public policies that will assist the never-married, low-income father in moving to complete involvement with his child or children.

Children's Rights Council
220 Eye Street NE, Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20002-4362
202/547-6227 (phone)
Works to strengthen families through education and advocacy; favors family formation and family preservation, but if families break up or are never formed, works to ensure a child frequent and continuing contact with two parents and extended family.

The Fatherhood Project
Families and Work Institute
330 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10001
212/465-2044, ext. 2003 (phone)
212/465-8637 (fax)
National research and education project that examines ways to support male involvement in child rearing.

Father-to-Father
Children, Youth, and Family Consortium
University of Minnesota
12 McNeal Hall
1985 Buford Hall
St. Paul, MN 55108
612/626-1212
Inspired by Vice President Al Gore to promote responsible fatherhood in communities across the United States.

National Center on Fathers and Families
Philadelphia Children's Network
Graduate School of Education
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104
215/686-3910 (phone)
215/686-3908 (fax)
Established to develop and implement a practice-focused research agenda that expands the knowledge base on father involvement.

National Fatherhood Initiative
600 Eden Road
Building E
Lancaster, PA 17601
717/581-8860
Public media campaign highlighting the absence of fathers in many families; advocates responsible fatherhood as the solution to this national crisis.

National Practitioners' Network for Fathers and Families
Families and Work Institute
330 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10001
212/465-2044 ext. 2003 (phone)
212/465-8637 (fax)
Is comprised of service providers, researchers, policymakers, and funders who share and provide information on fathers and families. Seeks to educate the public on developments in the field of fatherhood and family support.

Training Organizations

Avance
301 South Frio, Suite 310
San Antonio, TX 78207
210/270-4630
Community-based family support program for low-income Latino parents and their children; offers a special curriculum for fathers.

MELD for Young Dads
MELD
123 North Third Street, Suite 507
Minneapolis, MN 55401
612/332-7563 (phone)
612/344-1959 (fax)
A network of 10 programs in six states that work to connect fathers with their children; about 70 programs in 20 states have replicated this model, which focuses on peer education.

National Center for Fathering
10200 West 75th Street
Shawnee Mission, KS 66204
913/384-4661 (phone)
913/384-4665 (fax)
Researches fathering practices, provides training seminars for fathers, and conducts public education on fatherhood issues.

National Fathers' Network
Kindering Center
16120 NE Eighth Street
Bellevue, WA 98008
206/747-4004
Established to provide support to men whose children are born with or develop special needs.

National Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization
1090 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 1100
Washington, D.C. 20005-4961
202/789-6376
Encourages fathers to form bonds with their children through individual counseling, education, and mentors.

Public/Private Ventures
2005 Market Street, Suite 90
Philadelphia, PA 19103-7009
800/755-4778 or 215/557-4463 (phone) 215/557-4469 (fax)
Manages and evaluates social policy initiatives to help young people, especially the hard-to-serve, become productively employed and self-sufficient. Operates an Unwed Fathers Program that offers job training, educational services, counseling, and fatherhood development training.

Publications

Many of the organizations listed above can recommend resources other than those listed here. Some of the following book descriptions are adapted from *New Expectations: Community Strategies for Responsible Fatherhood* by James A. Levine and Edward W. Pitt.

Circles of Care and Understanding: Support Programs for Fathers of Children With Special Needs
by James E. May
1992 (Bethesda, Md.: Association for Care of Children's Health, 301/654-6549)
A practical guidebook on how to develop a support program for fathers whose children have special needs.

Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Enduring Legacy of African American Families
by Andrew Billingsley
1992 (New York: Simon and Schuster)
Available from FRC, 312/341-0900
A unique view of the strengths, diversity, and resiliency of African American families. Billingsley describes the major economic and social forces that have led to the socioeconomic situation of African American fathers and families today. The book dispels common myths, misconceptions, misunderstandings, and misinformation about African American families.

Fatherhood in America: A History
by Robert Griswold
1993 (New York: Basic Books, 212/207-7528).
The first full-scale historical analysis of men's lives as fathers, which shows how the cultural ideal of fatherhood has been redefined in response to changing economic and social circumstances.

Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem
by David Blankenhorn
1995 (New York: Basic Books, 212/207-7528).
Argues that fatherlessness is the driving factor behind every major American social problem, including teenage pregnancy, crime, violence against women, juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, and child poverty.

Father Love: What We Need, What We Seek, What We Must Create
by Richard Louv
1993 (New York: Pocket Books, 212/698-7000 or 800/223-2336).
Based on extensive interviews with fathers, mothers, and children across America, *Father Love* connects the personal experience of fatherhood to the broader social need to care for all children.

Fathers
by Ross Parke
1996 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 617/495-2577).
An accessible review of child development research on the role of fathers.

Getting Men Involved: Strategies for Early Childhood Programs
by James A. Levine, Dennis T. Murphy, and Sherrill Wilson
1993 (Scholastic Inc.)
Available from FRC: 312/341-0900
This workbook shows early childhood programs how they can encourage and support men in becoming active fathers and care-givers. Also includes portraits of 14 successful programs and a list of programs that work with fathers and materials on fathers.

The Heart of a Father: How Dads Can Shape the Destiny of America
by Ken Canfield
1996 (Chicago: Northfield Publishing, 800/593-DADS).
(National Center for Fathering)
Discusses the life cycle approach to the development of fathers and their children.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Life Without Father: Compelling New Evidence That Fatherhood and Marriage Are Indispensable for the Good of Children and Society

by David Popenoe

1996 (New York: Free Press, 212/702-4771).

Argues that fatherlessness is the driving factor behind every major American social problem. Includes a careful review of social science research.

New Expectations: Community Strategies for Responsible Fatherhood

by James A. Levine and Edward W. Pitt

1995 (New York: Families and Work Institute)

Available from FRC: 312/341-0900.

Offers a new way of thinking and acting to promote responsible fatherhood, including a jargon-free review of research, state-of- the-art review of community-based strategies, tips from leading practitioners, and a guide to more than 300 programs nationwide and to the 100 most useful publications.

Nurturing Young Black Males: Challenges to Agencies, Programs, and Social Policy

by Ronald B. Mincy

1994 (Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press, 202/833-7200).

Discusses the unique socioeconomic, psychological, and cultural problems of young African American males and how agencies, social programs, and social policymakers must develop new initiatives and strategies for dealing with these problems.

The Nurturing Father

by Kyle Pruett.

1987 (New York: Warner Books, 212/522-7200).

A groundbreaking study of the impact on children, mothers, and fathers when fathers take on the primary childrearing role.

The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap

by Stephanie Coontz

1992 (New York: Basic Books, 212/207-7528).

Offers a historical analysis of prevalent myths about American family values and what families used to be like. Without minimalizing the serious new problems that many American families face, Coontz warns that nostalgia for a largely mythical past of traditional values is a trap that can only cripple our capacity to solve today's problems.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FAMILY RESOURCE COALITION
200 South Michigan Avenue, 16th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604 312/341-0900 Fax: 312/341-9361

New from the Family Resource Coalition

Spring 1996

Making the Case for Family Support: An Essay with Supporting Documents

(1996, 29 pp., paper)
Item No. C032
Members: $5 Non-members: $7

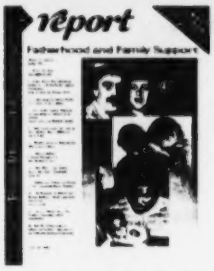
Here's what you've been waiting for: a concise, clear explanation of why family support is what America needs, and a stack of appendices that gives you the facts, figures, and reasoning to back it up. What are the pressing needs of America's families, and what does family support do to address them? What do "strengths-based" and "community-centered" mean—and why does America need to know? Q & A sections help you anticipate and answer common, yet challenging, questions. This is your source on the principles and premises of family support, typical program components, the costs of a crisis orientation to human services and why family support is the logical alternative, positive results of program evaluations, and where to turn for more information. Perfect for letters to the editor, funding proposals, and hundreds of other situations you face every day.

From Communities to Capitols: State Experiences with Family Support

Gail Koser, ed.
(1996, 136 pp., paper)
Item No. C031
Members: $15 Non-members: $18

In this time of changing funding streams, local family support providers and state-level policymakers stand a lot to gain from coordination of services on a statewide basis. Read how the 18 states with family support initiatives have implemented them, from school-linked services to programs that are administered through the health-care system, from home visiting to center-based services and activities. Chapters describe each initiative's history and context, mission, population served, service providers, core components, numbers of sites and families served, administration and governance, funding, accountability, and training and technical assistance. Key features are summarized in handy charts. The perfect tool for policymakers and planners, as well as local program staff who are working toward streamlined services.

Turn this page over for more new family support resources available from FRC. Order using your FRC publications catalog, or call 312/341-0900 x 129.



Fatherhood and Family Support

FRC Report
(Vol. 15, No. 1, 1996, 24 pp.)
Item No. RPT 151
Members: $4 Non-members: $5

Fathers and fatherhood have attracted the national spotlight. Find out why, and how you as a family support practitioner, researcher, family advocate, or policymaker can address the pressing issues that fathers and families face. Learn what attracts fathers to family support programs. Read about the latest research, including how current public policy affects families with low-income, noncustodial fathers. Find out how fathers' involvement in child rearing benefits child development, and read how programs across the nation are working to maximize fathers' involvement and serve all family members. Includes a resource file that takes you straight to reputable sources on this crucial subject.

Coming Soon

Guidelines for Practice

(1996, paper)
Item No. C033
Call for pricing

This book is the culmination of FRC's extensive project to define how family support principles are operationalized by programs and what constitutes family-supportive practice. Tying together a review of academic literature and the experiences of family support program providers and participants throughout the nation, *Guidelines for Practice* belongs in the briefcase or on the bookshelf, desk, or kitchen table of anyone who seeks the best services and support for families. Also part of the *Guidelines for Practice* project are:

Linking Family Support and Early Childhood Programs: Issues, Experiences, Opportunities
By Mary Larner, Ph. D.
1995 / Item No. C028 / 35 pp. / Members: $5, Non-members $7

Key Characteristics and Features of Community-Based Family Support Programs
By Carl Dunst, Ph. D.
1995 / Item No. C029 / 60 pp. / Members: $5, Non-members $7

Community-Based Family Support Centers: Working with Abusive and At-Risk Families *(working title)*
By Joyce Thomas
Coming Soon

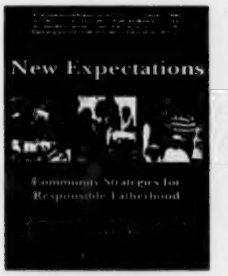
Diversity,Cultural Democracy, and the Family Support Movement *(working title)*
By Makungu Akinyela
Coming Soon

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

New from the Family Resource Coalition

continued

FRC is pleased to distribute these family support resources in addition to the ones it publishes. Order using your FRC publications catalog, or call 312/341-0900 x 129.



New Expectations: Community Strategies for Responsible Fatherhood

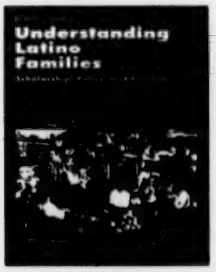
By James A. Levine and Edward W. Pitt

(Families and Work Institute, 1995, 230 pp., paper)

Item No. XD43

Members & Non-members: $22

This ground-breaking book is a life-saver for communities and programs that are seeking to promote responsible fatherhood. From the directors of the Fatherhood Project of the Families and Work Institute comes this new way of thinking and acting to promote responsible fatherhood. Want to be up on the latest research without wading through a lot of jargon? This is the book for you. The book's review of state-of-the-art community-based strategies and tips from leading practitioners allow you to benefit from the experiences of those who have tried and succeeded. *New Expectations* includes a guide to more than 300 programs nationwide, plus descriptions of 100 publications to turn to for information that will help you make your program, agency, or system father-friendly.



Understanding Latino Families: Scholarship, Policy, and Practice

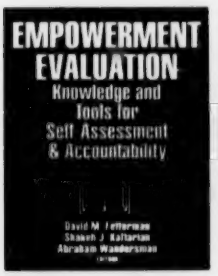
Ruth Zambrana, ed.

(Sage Publications, 1995, 242 pp., paper)

Item No. XD45

Members & Non-members: $21.95

Researchers, family support workers, planners, scholars, and students will find find this book an invaluable resource. Offering an integrated, culturally sensitive focus, it presents a dynamic new approach on the strengths of Latino/Hispanic groups, the structural processes that impede their progress, and the cultural and familial processes that enhance their intergenerational adaptation and resiliency. A leading group of scholars clearly presents social and demographic profiles of Latino groups in the United States, empirical and conceptual reviews of Latino family approaches, and practice and policy implications from the studies of Latino social programs. Discussed are salient topics such as the economic well-being of Latino families, prospects for Latino children and adolescents, the adjustment of Central American refugees, and Latino child and family health concerns.



Empowerment Evaluation: Knowledge and Tools for Self-Assessment and Accountability

David Fetterman, Shakeh Kaftarian, and Abraham Wandersman, eds.

(Sage Publications, 1996, 411 pp., paper)

Item No. XD44

Members & Non-members: $26.95

This outstanding group of evaluators from academia, government, nonprofits, and foundations explores empowerment evaluation, a method of using evaluation concepts, techniques, and findings to foster families' improvement and self-determination. Beginning with an in-depth examination of this type of evaluation as it has been adopted in academic and foundation settings, this book highlights empowerment evaluation's role in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' substance abuse prevention programs. Included are down-to-earth tools to help you conduct empowerment evaluation and recommended next steps to help bring empowerment evaluation and community-building together to strengthen families.

Changing the Way America Works for Families

The Family Resource Coalition is a membership, consulting, and advocacy organization that has been advancing the movement to strengthen and support families since 1981. The family support movement and FRC seek to strengthen and empower families and communities so that they can foster the optimal development of children, youth, and adult family members. FRC builds networks, produces resources, advocates for public policy, provides consulting services, and gathers knowledge to help the family support movement grow.

Our network ranges from those working on the frontlines with families in local communities, to state officials grappling with how best to deliver services, to Capitol Hill public policy analysts, to academicians—all contributing their important perspectives. We maintain the nation's largest database on family support programs and build our base of information through continual collaboration with family support scholars and program providers.

Our day-to-day work includes:

- Providing technical assistance, training, and consulting services for programs, schools, and government agencies to link family support to other services for children and families
- Communicating family support issues and information to policymakers
- Tracking federal, state, and local policy initiatives, and making this information available to Coalition members and others
- Providing leadership at the national level to plan strategy and gain resources for the continued growth of the field
- Collecting and disseminating current knowledge on program design, administration, staffing, financing, and outcomes
- Publishing current theory on family support issues as well as materials on how to start and manage programs
- Publishing the highly acclaimed *FRC Report*, a quarterly periodical devoted to family support issues and *FRC Connection*, a bimonthly networking newsletter for Coalition members
- Sponsoring national conferences and other meetings
- Encouraging information flow, networking, and collaboration among local programs.

For more information on joining the Family Resource Coalition or to receive a catalog of our publications and services, contact us at 200 S. Michigan Ave., 16th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604, 312/341-0900 (phone), 312/341-9361 (fax) or via HandsNet at HN 4860.

FAMILY RESOURCE COALITION

FAMILY RESOURCE COALITION

Board of Directors

BERNICE WEISSBOURD, President
Family Focus, IL

RUTH MASSINGA, Chair
Casey Family Program, WA

SHARON LYNN KAGAN, Former Chair
Yale Bush Center, CT

MUSTAFA ABDUL-SALAAM
New Haven Family Alliance

ANN ADALIST ESTRIN
Parent Resource Association, PA

MARYLEE ALLEN
Children's Defense Fund, DC

CHARLES BRUNER
Child and Family Policy Center, IA

ELIZABETH CARLSON
National Futures Association, IL

MARIA CHAVEZ
Family Development Program, NM

J.T. CHILDS
IBM Corporation, NY

MONCRIEFF COCHRAN
Cornell University, NY

FRANK FARROW
Center for the Study of Social Policy, DC

SID GARDNER
Center for Collaboration for Children, CSU, CA

SANDRA KESSLER HAMBURG
Committee for Economic Development, NY

JAMES HINCHLIFF
Peoples Energy Corporation, IL

MARY HOLT
MGHolt & Associates, IL

ALICE KING
First Lady of New Mexico, NM

CHRISTIAN C. KJELDSEN
Johnson & Johnson, NJ

REBECCA K. LEET
Rebecca Leet & Associates, VA

LUBA H. LYNCH
A.L. Mailman Foundation, NY

HELEN NISSANI
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, OR

BEA ROMER
First Lady of Colorado, CO

ANNE L. TUOHY
Glenview, IL

KHATIB WAHEED
Caring Communities Program, MO

SYLVIA YEE
Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, CA

FAMILY RESOURCE COALITION

200 SOUTH
MICHIGAN AVENUE
16TH FLOOR
CHICAGO ILLINOIS 60604

312/341-0900
FAX: 312/341-9361

Address Correction Requested

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
WHEATON, IL
Permit No. 909

23 1

BEST COPY AVAILABLE